

ON Community Briefing

Highlighting the priorities and progress of ON communities and partners

Opportunity Neighborhoods (ON) is the county-wide organizing framework for residents, community-based partners, FCPS, Fairfax County, and other supporters to work together and deliver needed resources that are equitable, accessible, and effective for youth and their caregivers.



Youth from RestON and ON Herndon participated in a breakout session on planning for college during a recent Youth Career Symposium. Read more about the event on Page 8. (Photo courtesy of Cornerstones.)

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SITES, LEADS, AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

ON Focal Areas

ON develops capacity and infrastructure in five primary focal areas. We engage residents and partners to work towards positive change in each area.



INCLUSIVE AND CONNECTED COMMUNITY

Youth and caregivers are active leaders and contribute and benefit fully from a community that supports and encourages them to thrive.



CONNECTED & MOTIVATED YOUTH

Youth are plugged in to a comprehensive network of caring adults that encourages and guides their positive academic and personal goals.



SCHOOL READINESS & EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Children and adults have access to an array of evidence-based, quality resources that prepares them for and addresses barriers to lifelong learning.



WELLNESS & FAMILY STABILITY

A continuum of supports allows youth and families to identify their goals for health, safety, stability, and self-sufficiency, and to access resources for reaching them.



WORKFORCE READINESS & STUDENT CAREER PREPAREDNESS

Students and parents are empowered to take advantage of the academic and career preparatory resources that are best tailored to their personal skills and assets.

ON Impact

Metrics across all sites

Between January and March 2022, our ON-wide efforts included:

49
residents
of prioritized
communities served in
an ambassador or
other leadership role

23
active teams
organized to move ON work
forward, including community
councils, working groups,
steering committees, and the
ON Partners' Network

78
strategic partners*
supported ON through
service, data, or
sponsorship

176
attendees
participated in training or
professional development
through ON, bringing the year-
to-date total to **579 attendees**

**Strategic partners are those partners that contribute programming, data, and/or sponsorship to prevent and address root cause issues, and/or increase access, quality, and utilization of needed resources in the community.*



Police officers played soccer with youth during the Culmore Community Day. (Photo courtesy of Second Story.)

In Focus

Using layered place-based initiatives to enhance impact *Crossroads ON & Second Story*

As part of Neighborhood and Community Services' Neighborhood Initiatives Program (NIP), nonprofit organizations receive funding to lead Opportunity Neighborhood sites (see table on page 9). Nonprofits also receive NIP funding to run center-based programs and services in a dozen sites around the county, as well as a community school site. Many of the NIP centers are in or next to an ON and give residents a place to connect with resources and neighbors. They are often led by the same nonprofit as the ON and serve as key partners in achieving the goals of Opportunity Neighborhoods.

ON nonprofits are all involved in a variety of complex efforts to serve the community. To illustrate this, let's look at Second Story's role leading and supporting layered place-based initiatives, including Crossroads ON (which includes areas around Falls Church), the Culmore Family Resource Center (FRC), the Culmore Teen Center, Stronger2 Health Literacy Project, and other place-based efforts led by partners in the area.

In addition to their comprehensive work serving unhoused youth, Second Story staff doing community-based work in Crossroads ON and Culmore FRC have distinct roles, and coordinate with partners in the spirit of collective impact, with a shared vision, and plan for desired outcomes developed with local community residents. Some of the ways the Culmore FRC and other center-based staff support and partner with Crossroads ON include:

Providing access to resources such as food, vaccines, and program registration in a location easily accessible to community members. Culmore FRC hosts weekly food distributions where residents can pick up food, receive assistance with applying for Medicaid, scheduling vaccinations, and connecting with other resources with the help of ON Crossroads Community Ambassadors. Community Ambassadors are trained to help families register their children for kindergarten and Head Start.

Hosting programs that align with ON focal areas and residents' priorities. The Culmore Youth Outreach Program at the Culmore Teen Center recently hosted a workshop on financial literacy where teens learned practical skills to use and share with family members, such as how to track expenses, write checks, and fill out money orders. These topics support ON priorities which include career and asset development, and address needs expressed by Culmore-area residents during recent needs assessments.

In Focus

Continued

The Culmore Teen Center provides space and opportunity for Culmore-area teens to connect to each other and to caring adults. Having trusted adults to talk to is one of the many protective factors that have been shown to help build resilience in youth; youth who have three or more of these protective factors are less vulnerable to risky behaviors. Youth regularly receive help with homework and ESOL tutoring, participate in mental health and anti-vaping workshops, and attend weekly youth council meetings.

Bringing community voice to ON planning. To prepare for the new program year, ON staff from NCS met with ambassadors and members of the Culmore Youth Council to learn how Opportunity Neighborhoods can better serve their community. The youth voiced concern for their safety and economic security. They also shared their dream of building a community that welcomes everyone and brings people from all backgrounds together. As one Youth Council member said, “[We need to] bring kids together to help other kids. Everybody should have a fair opportunity to experience positive things.” The conversation played a key role in setting the ON-wide priorities for the new program year.

Helping inform cross-system and county-wide work. Second Story brings its perspective as an ON nonprofit to multiple countywide initiatives to elevate community voice, improve access to resources, and make systems more equitable. Second Story’s Chief Executive Officer represents the nonprofit sector on the Successful Children and Youth Policy Team (SCYPT) and helped develop the SCYPT’s current priorities. Second Story has also helped link residents to ongoing work and new initiatives, including identifying residents to help develop and participate in a new countywide economic mobility program, and to inform solutions to address safety concerns in the community.



Left: A teen learns about cars and careers in the auto industry from a representative from Auto Elite Customs while at the Culmore Teen Center. Right: A Crossroads ON Community Ambassador shares information on Head Start with a resident. (Photos courtesy of Second Story.)

Continuing the Work

Planning for 2023

During the spring, ON staff met with ambassadors and youth who live in the Opportunity Neighborhoods to hear from them what they see as benefits of being part of ON, what we should do differently, and their dreams for young people in their community. These conversations helped ON staff sharpen our focus for the upcoming year -- although each of the five ON sites is different, the residents identified similar benefits and concerns, and shared similar dreams for their community's youth.

As we look ahead to the Opportunity Neighborhoods will focus work around four themes during the 2023 program year (July 2022 to June 2023): ***Career and Asset Development; Community Safety and Security; Enrichment for Children, Youth, and Teens; and Welcoming Communities of Service.***

The ON 2023 themes are consistent with our focal areas (page 2), ON strategies, and the established working groups in the five sites. The themes also reflect current priorities of the Successful Children and Youth Policy Team (SCYPT): behavioral health access, school readiness, career readiness, and Community Schools.

Organizing our work around these themes will help us work together to achieve our shared goals, involve more of our supporters, connect community voice and support to related countywide initiatives, address resident access barriers, and measure progress within and across the five ON sites.

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What is your dream for young people in your community?

"More opportunities for young people, more scholarships and financial help so we don't have to be worried about our families." – A Culmore teen council representative

"For them to be safe, feel comfortable enough to go outside and do what they want to do, get the education they deserve, [and] get the support they need to succeed."
– A Reston ambassador

"To have productive youth who can help in the community, succeed in life, help others with an attitude that is contagious and inspiring!" – A Herndon ambassador

"[For young people to] have a clear vision, not to lose their identity, to be with each other, forming leaders to help the community." – An Annandale ambassador

"To be successful, to be somebody tomorrow." - A Mount Vernon ambassador

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ON Impact

What does it look like?

RestON and ON Herndon teens make roadmaps to achieve their dream career.

Since August 2020, Opportunity Neighborhoods Reston and Herndon have collaboratively developed, coordinated, and facilitated four workshops for teens focused on self-awareness, vision planning, and career exploration. Over 50 teens learned about their unique skills, explored their career interests, learned how to set goals and plan for the future, and created a roadmap that outlined the steps necessary to reach their dream career. Strategic partnerships with Cornerstones, Fairfax NCS, FCPS, and local community centers helped make the workshops a success. The final event, a Youth Career Symposium, took place in May at the Rowan Tree. More than 20 teens continued the dialogue around intersectionality and identity, and how their identities and personalities are related to their careers. They also connected with professionals in the healthcare, IT, dental, business and marketing, sports, and college planning fields. *(Photos courtesy of Cornerstones.)*



ON Impact

What does it look like?

Expanding access to free tax filing. During the spring, ON Mount Vernon partnered with AARP to expand access to free tax filing services in community. Nearly 100 residents filed their taxes through the program, and 19 residents were able to receive an individual tax identification number (ITIN). (Photo courtesy of United Community.)



Understanding community needs. ON ambassadors and local school parent liaisons helped conduct ON Annandale's recent community survey. ONs survey the community at least once a year to assess community needs and ensure that ON work matches residents' priorities. These assessments are often done at community food distributions and other sites where residents are accessing services. (Photos courtesy of FACETS.)



To learn more, visit
<http://bit.ly/opportunityneighborhoods>

Sites and Leads

	Mount Vernon	Reston	Crossroads	Herndon	Annandale
Established	2011	2016	2020	2020	2021
Lead Nonprofit	United Community	Cornerstones	Second Story	Cornerstones	FACETS
FCPS Region	3	1	2	1	2
HHS Region	1	3	2	3	2
Site Scope	Prioritized communities in zip codes 22306 and 22309, and schools in the Mount Vernon and Lewis pyramids that serve those communities	Prioritized communities in zip codes 20190 and 20191, and schools in the South Lakes pyramid that serve those communities	Prioritized communities in zip codes 22041 and 22044, and schools in the Justice pyramid that serve those communities	Prioritized communities in zip codes 20170 and 20171, and schools in the Herndon and Westfield pyramids that serve those communities	Prioritized communities in zip code 22003, and schools in the Annandale and Falls Church pyramids that serve those communities



As the lead nonprofit of ON Herndon and RestON, Cornerstones values established community leaders. WINS (Women Inspired Network) members play an important role in the work of ON Herndon. The WINS recently met with ON Ambassadors to connect and discuss community needs. (Photo courtesy of Cornerstones.)

**Opportunity
 Neighborhoods**

<http://bit.ly/opportunityneighborhoods>



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